

Introduction

‘All we Irish, inhabitants of the world’s edge, are disciples of Saints Peter and Paul’ (*sanctorum Petri et Pauli ... discipuli sumus, toti Iberi, ultimi habitatores mundi*).¹ These words, written in 612 or 613 to Pope Boniface IV by the missionary Columbanus, show an Irishman’s development of the spatial imperative found in Luke 24:47 and Acts 1:8 and 13:47, that the gospel extend to all nations, reaching *ad ultimum terrae*, to the farthest reaches of the earth, and to those peoples—the Irish—located there. This is the same biblical concept that earlier convinced the evangelizing Briton Patrick to leave his own homeland and bring Christianity to Ireland, that island at the earth’s uttermost margins.² In 632–33 the Irish bishop Cumman bitingly developed this spatial rhetoric of Irish peripherality to describe those dissenting minorities, largely Irish, who disputed the Roman dating of Easter as blemishes or irritations at the world’s edges: they are located ‘almost at the end of the earth, and if I may say so, but pimples on the face of the earth’ (*pene extremi et, ut ita dicam, mentagrae orbis terrarum*).³ In a description composed a century later that influenced discourses about Ireland throughout the Middle Ages,⁴ the Northumbrian monk Bede more idealistically highlighted the sanctity that remoteness confers. An island limning civilization and the unknown watery regions beyond, Bede’s Ireland is an otherworldly North Atlantic Promised Land, sustaining its inhabitants year round, rich in milk and honey and inimical to poisonous creatures:

Hibernia autem et latitudine sui status et salubritate ac serenitate aerum multum Britanniae praestat, ita ut raro ibi nix plus quam triduana remaneat; nemo propter hiemem aut faena secet aestate aut stabula fabricet iumentis; nullum ibi reptile uideri soleat, nullus uiuere serpens ualeat. Nam saepe illo de Britannia adlati serpentes, mot ut proximante terries nauigio odore aeris illius adtacti fuerint,

intereunt; quin potius omnia pene quae de eadem insula / sunt contra uenenum ualent ... Diues lactis et mellis insula nec uinearum expers, piscium uolocrumque.

(Ireland is broader than Britain, is healthier and has a much milder climate, so that snow rarely lasts there for more than three days. Hay is never cut in summer for winter use nor are stables built for their beasts. No reptile is found there nor could a serpent survive; for although serpents have often been brought from Britain, as soon as the ship approaches land they are affected by the scent of the air and quickly perish. In fact almost everything that the island produces is efficacious against poison ... The island abounds in milk and honey, nor does it lack vines, fish, and birds.)⁵

Bede's influential description evokes a biblical, Edenic vision. Five hundred years later, the twelfth-century historian Gerald of Wales, a staunch apologist for England's invasion of Ireland, wrote to de-sanctify Bede's Ireland. In his *Topographia Hiberniae* (ca. 1188), Gerald famously argued that

Sicut enim orientales plagæ propriis quibusdam et sibi innatis præminent et præcellunt ostentis, sic et occidentales circumferentiæ suis naturae miraculis illustrantur. Quoties quippe, tanquam seriis et veris fatigata negotiis, paululum secedit et excedit, remotis in partibus, quasi verecundis et occultis natura ludit excessibus.⁶

(Just as the countries of the East are remarkable and distinguished by certain prodigies peculiar and native to themselves, so the boundaries of the West also are made remarkable by their own wonders of nature. For sometimes tired, as it were, of the true and the serious, she [Natura] draws aside and goes away, and in these remote parts indulges herself in these secret and distant freaks.)⁷

Throughout his text, Gerald shocks the reader with descriptions of the Irish, the 'secret and distant freaks', per O'Meara's translation, of this remote land that teeters on the edge of the known world. Gerald (and others following him, including Ranulph Higden and his Middle English translators) developed Ireland's remoteness and the consequent barbarity of its people in quite sinister and rhetorically enduring ways.⁸

Discourses on Ireland all worked in different ways to point, for better or for worse, to Ireland's peripherality and geographic outsider status, and the implications of placement at the extreme borders of the world were severe. Medieval *mappae mundi* show how far Ireland was perceived as being from the traditional center

of the world, Jerusalem, or from an alternate focal point, Rome, the capital of Christian religious, intellectual and cultural civilization.⁹ The early medieval authority Isidore of Seville, much loved by the Irish, defined all peoples in terms of the places they inhabited, and asserted that their ‘faces and coloring, the size of their bodies, and their various temperaments correspond to various climates’¹⁰ (*diversitatem enim caeli et facies hominum et colores et corporum quantitates et animorum diversitates existunt*),¹¹ presenting easy-going Greeks, changeable Africans and fierce, acerbically witted Gauls. The superiority, inferiority, sanctity, depravity and even monstrosity of peoples and places were based, in large part, on their relative proximity to the world’s center. Location was an important determinant of whether one belonged to or was excluded from medieval socio-cultural and intellectual elites, and Ireland and its people were assigned critical roles in constructing the medieval Western world’s conceptions of self and otherness.

But what responses did this belief system elicit from the Irish themselves, who saw themselves as legitimate members of European intellectual and socio-cultural communities, linked to Rome and Jerusalem through shared investment in the Church, as Columbanus explained to Boniface? What was it like to be condemned to the periphery of one’s own *oikumene*, to the limits of the inhabited, civilized world? How could the Irish remap the world and its margins to establish a more vital position for themselves? This book shows how the Irish developed a literature that gave them, and the landscapes they occupied and wrote about, a central place in the medieval European imagination.

Living on an island at the very edge of the known world, the medieval Irish were in a unique position to examine the spaces of the North Sea region and contemplate how location shapes a people; consequently, we can say that Irish narratives of place form one of the richest and most complex bodies of medieval topographical writing. Experiencing this geography in many ways—as monastic *peregrini*, as penitent pilgrims, as heroic adventurers pursuing their varied quests, but also as ambitious early dynasts and later subjects of English conquest—the Irish translated the physical world around them into narratives about their identity and their transnational, even globally significant, place in the world. The Irish wrote extensively about their island and the places that surrounded them, and an immense body of poetry and prose in Latin and Irish, written from ca. 700–1250, verbally maps out Ireland, the North Atlantic archipelago and the world beyond. The Irish

understood themselves in terms of the lands they came from, voyaged towards, settled, named and converted into narrative. These topographical texts and traditions all address important aspects of culture and identity (Christian, heroic, intellectual, political) and contemplate what being a medieval Irish person meant in Ireland, Britain and Europe. The same issues were approached from the opposite direction by writers in England, who also used topographic devices and tropes to help them attempt to impose an identity on the Irish that cohered with, in several instances, a colonial perspective on Ireland and its people. It is no surprise that these two topographical traditions, in many ways so closely intertwined, produced significantly different accounts of the nature of Ireland and its place in the wider world.

In *A landscape of words*, I show that the texts produced by and about the medieval Irish contain perhaps the highest concentration of literary topographies in the wider medieval European milieu: only in Ireland was a distinct genre of placelore formalized and popularized. One need not turn to lesser-known writings to prove this; medieval Ireland's canonical literary texts also establish that place-writing is globally important across literature produced by and about the Irish. Our knowledge of the Irish places named in the sources is fairly robust because of extensive study by scholars of Ireland from across the disciplines. In most cases, we know geographic coordinates and sometimes possess detailed maps and archeological reports to help us visualize the physical contours. We can often track references to the mythic and historical personages and founding figures that the sources tell us first settled them; the kings, queens and political leaders who ruled from them; and the kin-groups who occupied them, altered their contours and fought to maintain control over them. Legal texts, annals and hagiographic writings tell us about the communities who assembled together in these places for judgments, fairs and religious rituals; the slain who were buried there; the saints, holy men and women, who sanctified the landscapes with their presence. In short, much work on important Irish sites has been done, and done well, as recourse to the scholarship cited in this book will attest. Nonetheless, medieval Irish spatial *discourse*—and the artistic techniques, vocabularies, representational strategies and narrative logics developed by poets and composers in crafting those accounts—have themselves received little explicit attention. To fill that gap, rather than scrutinizing the places themselves I consider the enrichment of these places through verbal deposits, the metaphors and meanings

gathered into them and the role of words in enculturating them, in creating ‘landscapes of the mind’ that maintain an abiding power even as they become detached from the soil or physical site itself.¹² My contention is that, across several centuries and textual traditions, the diverse literary representations of Irish spaces share much, such that we can begin to recognize the contours of what I call the Irish poetics of space.

A landscape of words traces the generation, dissemination across genre and time, and deployment of this well-developed medieval poetics of Ireland and the North Atlantic region more broadly. The book considers the ‘greatest hits’ of (and about) medieval Ireland: *Navigatio Sancti Brendani*, *Immram Curaig Maíle Dúin* and vernacular voyage tales, *Táin Bó Cúalnge*, *Acallam na Senórach*, Gerald of Wales’s *Topographia* and *Expugnatio Hibernica*, and accounts of Saint Patrick’s Purgatory, with representative examples from a range of genres analyzed to track the consistent foregrounding of topographical discourses. The medieval Irish did not only innovate significantly in developing a geospatial literature. In simultaneously theorizing the process and its implications, medieval Irish thinkers also enacted a medieval ‘spatial turn’, a focused and sustained literary consideration of what it means to be in a powerfully transformative landscape. Irish placelore also profoundly influenced other literatures of the North Atlantic region, especially through the export (and later translation) of early texts like Adomnán’s *De locis sanctis*, accounts of Saint Brendan’s voyage and the movement of textualized Irish places such as Saint Patrick’s Purgatory throughout medieval Europe and its vernacular literatures.

Visiting Rome in Ireland and traveling the River Boyne to paradise

Topographic writing generates a literary space in which to explore, define and concretize identity, and in some subtle yet brilliant ways Irish spatial narratives show that movement away from the center of the mapped world also provided opportunities for personal and communal improvement—even a sense of superiority over more centrally placed peoples. Perhaps because of Ireland’s extreme location, Irish scholars were particularly driven to devise ways of overcoming the limits imposed by physical peripherality, and to develop new means of occupying important yet inaccessible spaces.

The *Auraicept na n-Éces* (‘Primer of the Poets’), an Old Irish treatise (ca. 750) on *bérta Féne*, the ‘language of the Féni’, or Irish

people, tells that following the fall of Nimrod's Tower at Babel, Fénius Farsaid took the best and most beautiful parts of every language and from those fragments forged Irish: this remarkable pedigree ancestrally links Irish to every spoken tongue.¹³ In this story, the shattered linguistic relics of the fallen peoples and places of the Old Testament are unified and restored to virtually divine status as the Irish language, with the narrative tracing movement from the cursed site of Babel to an Edenic Ireland sanctified by its use of this restored holy speech. Irish authors took great pains to show how the best and brightest decided to make Ireland their homeland, and, working within the worldview that positioned them as marginal, they revalorized their own positions by remapping the world, geographically expanding core Judeo-Christian narratives to give Ireland and its vernacular a central place. Peripherality, in myths of language, place and movement, was reworked as a marker of sanctity and accomplishment.

Like language, water, the traversable conduit for seafaring peoples, was another trope used to join the eastern and western halves of the world and prevent Ireland from being disconnected. The poem *Boand* details one of Ireland's most extensive and important waterways, the River Boyne, and confidently promotes a worldview where water links Ireland to Eden. When the waters that are absorbed into Adam's paradise next reappear in the spring of Segais, peripherality is cleverly reformulated to become proximity, and *Boand I* maps the connective vectors uniting Ireland and Eden. The poem opens in the otherworldly *síd* from which Boand (the Boyne) flows until the river 'reaches the paradise of Adam' (*co roshaig pardus Adaim*, 1.8) so that, as Kay Muhr puts it, 'the sea, and the holy rivers of Ireland and the world, are linked together in one circular motion'.¹⁴

Síd Nechtain sund forsin t-sléib,
lecht mic Labrada lán-géir,
assa silenn in sruth slán
dianid ainm Bóand bith-lán ...

Síd Nechtain is the name that is on
the mountain here,
the grave of the full-keen son of
Labraid,
from which flows the stainless river
whose name is Boand ever-full ...

... Sabrann dar tír Saxan slán,
Tibir i ráith na Román,
Sruth n-Iordanen iarsain sair,
ocus Sruth n-Eufrait adbail.

... *Severn* she is called through the
land of the sound Saxons,
Tiber in the Romans' keep:
River Jordan thereafter in the east
and vast *River Euphrates*.

Sruth Tigris i pardus búan,
fota sair síst fri himlúad:
ó phardus daris ille
co srothaib na síde-se. S.

River Tigris in enduring paradise,
long is she in the east, a time of
wandering
from paradise back again hither
to the streams of this Sid.¹⁵

Boand, ‘ever full’ (*bith-lán*), is known by fifteen different names (*cóic anmand déc*, 1.5), the poet tells us, nine of which denote Irish rivers and six of which refer to international waters, including Rome’s Tiber, the East’s Jordan and Euphrates, and finally the River Tigris ‘in everlasting paradise’ (*i pardus búan*). The poet’s declaration of each river’s name moves us across Europe and into the Holy Land through this versified landscape. Where brightly colored rivers draw our eye around the world in the *mappae mundi*, *Boand I* enacts this movement verbally.¹⁶ Furthermore, by referencing Adam’s ‘enduring paradise’ (*pardus Adaim; pardus búan*, lines 9, 33), the poem shows the temporal elision characteristic of the *mappae mundi*, in which sites and scenes from the past—paradise before expulsion—are depicted as outside of time. Ireland lacks the great *mappae mundi*, but its poets map the same scheme in words: Irish landscapes are verbal rather than visual.

Boand wanders or moves about (*himlúad*) the Holy Land for a period (*síst*): personified as a pilgrim, this river makes her way from Ireland to the Holy Land, until she enters paradise and bubbles back up in the *síd*. This looping, spatial circuit about or around (*im*) is emphasized by the form and structure of the poem, and provides an example of how Irish composers developed a poetics of space and used formal devices to address and emphasize issues of movement both thematically and structurally. Specifically, the last word of the nine-stanza description of Boand’s world circuit employs *dúnad* (‘closing’ or ‘shutting’), a poetic technique of concluding a poem by meaningfully repeating its first word: as Boand makes a connective watery circuit around the world, so too the poem winds back to its opening word, the otherworldly landscape term *síd*.¹⁷ The verses make an Irish holy site—the well of Segais at the *síd* where the Boand bubbles up after flowing into paradise—both the terminus and origin point of this fluvial circuit linking Ireland and Eden. This is an important valorization of the Irish otherworld: water can flow directly from Adam’s paradise to the Síde Nechtan, situated under a mountain and posited as an inaccessible but marked holy site, much like the Garden of Eden. Though the poem is not entirely clear, it seems to conceive of an earthly

sphere in which these sites are linked, through underground waterways, the two termini, an otherworldly Irish mound and Adam's paradise, both contiguous with and terrestrially distant from each other. A stanza from another poem (*Boand II*) tells us that Christ explicitly blesses the Boyne and presents it as Ireland's Jordan, privileging another kind of contiguity with the Holy Land:

Bóand, bendacht forsín sruth roordaig Críst co cóem-chruth, conid hí ó glenn do glenn sruth Eorathanan na Hérenn.	Boand—a blessing on the stream did Christ fair of form ordain; so she from glen to glen is the river Jordan of Erin. ¹⁸
--	---

Boand I and *II* make the argument that these holy geographies can be accessed locally in Ireland.

A brief Old Irish poem also suggests unexpected ways in which faraway landscapes, including the stage on which Judeo-Christian history unfolded, might be as accessible in Ireland as elsewhere:

Teicht do Róim: mór saído, becc torbai; in rí chon-daigi hí foss, mani-mbera latt, ní fogbai. ¹⁹	Going to Rome, Great trouble, little benefit; the king which you seek there, if you do not carry him with you, you will not find him.
--	---

This poem registers disenchantment with pilgrimage, and questions the spiritual benefits of a costly journey that could be filled with threats and worldly distractions from spiritual development. Simultaneously, the poem can also be seen as an endorsement of virtual travel and imaginative spatial practice. Through text, through poetry, through the Word, the poem encourages its readers to contemplate Rome and its sought-after king, God, so that he is found in every landscape. As its author wittily remarks, God is not located in the distant, famed site of Rome itself—rather, God resides within a person, wherever he or she may be.

An interesting physically spatial analogue to this Irish skill of moving the Holy Land west is the curious fact that the placename *Róm* ('Rome') also becomes applied to Irish religious sites. As the *Dictionary of the Irish Language (eDIL)* records, in Irish religious literature *róim* was used to describe 'a saint's settlement in which he was buried', and a burial-ground more generally, with later poetry expanding *róim* to denote important secular sites as well, such as a

king's residence.²⁰ The Irish Christian landscape houses several local *róma*, or little Romes, and readers of this poem might envision themselves finding God at nearby sites of piety, where prayer and liturgical practice make Rome and the saints part of local geography. Hagiographical writing also bears witness to this localization of Rome in Ireland, as Lisa Bitel demonstrates in her important study of early medieval Irish sacred landscapes. For instance, Bitel shows how Cogitosus, in his *vita* of Brigit, uses ekphrastic descriptions featuring the terms, images and spatial logics of an urban, romanized Christian landscape, to legitimize the rural Irish site of Kildare as a powerful *civitas* and depict its saintly founder, Brigit, as presiding over a New Jerusalem in Ireland. With his verbal description of Brigit's church and tomb, Cogitosus 'intended his text to parallel and evoke a work of architecture rather than illuminating its physical reality', and he thus filled his account with details and 'practical visual cues for those ignorant of Rome but desirous of it, and who sought it in Brigit's city'.²¹ Cogitosus, Bitel demonstrates, fashions architectural spaces from words so his audience can experience a pilgrimage through Brigit's *vita*: words persuasively recoded rural Irish spaces as sacred Christian landscapes evocative of Rome and *romanitas*.²² Irish language and landscape show us that Rome and what it represents can be experienced at home in Ireland. Discipleship of Peter and Paul, as Columbanus pointed out, brings Rome to Ireland, but language and ekphrastic description further concretize those links. In Ireland's physical environment, words are overlain onto local spaces in powerfully appropriative ways: this is one important element of an Irish poetics and practice of space.

As the composer of *Techt do Róim* asks, why travel to the Holy Land when, in many ways, the Holy Land and 'what you seek' is right here in Ireland? The Boyne is already linked to paradise; the Irish language is a restoration of pre-Babel tongues; 'Rome' and God can be found in any Irish churchyard; and, as we will see in Chapter 1, the holy sites can be inhabited through narrative topographies like those written by the Irish abbot of Iona, Adomnán (ca. 624–704). The sources make the argument that God and the wondrous world could be made available to all, no matter one's location, resources or physical limitations. Places and experiences central to Judeo-Christian identity are available in the Irish Sea region, overlain onto a real landscape, but also materialized in literary form.

Writing and the Irish landscape

All around me greenwood trees
 I hear blackbird verse on high
 quavering lines on vellum leaves
 birdsong pours down from the sky.²³

Words and landscape interlace in transformative ways, thereby becoming more than the sum of their parts, as suggested by Ciaran Carson's artful rendering of this Old Irish stanza, which was written around 800–50. The full text (with Ruth Lehmann's more literal translation) records that

Dom-farcaí fidbaide fál
 fom-chain loíd luin–lúad nád cé; l;
 h-úas mo lebrán, ind línech,
 fom-chain trírech inna n-én.

A hedge of a wood-thicket looks
 down on me;
 A blackbird's song sings to me (a
 message not concealed)
 Above my little book, the lined one,
 the twittering of birds sings to me.

Fomm-chain cói menn, medair
 mass,
 hí m-brot glas de dindgnaib doss.
 Débráth! nom Choimdiu cóima:
 caín-scríbaimm fo roída ross.

The clear-voiced cuckoo calls to
 me, a lovely speech
 in a gray mantle from bushy
 dwellings.
 God's Judgment! The Lord
 befriends me!
 I write fair under the great wood of
 the forest.²⁴

This poem is often cited to evidence a specifically Irish celebration of nature, with figures like the ninth-century Irish philosopher John Scotus Eriugena formulating a parallel understanding of nature as a medium for connection with God in his discussions of theophany and creation, as Alfred Siewers has argued.²⁵ Irish embrace of the natural world has provided a much-discussed contrast with early English distancing from nature, and the belief, articulated by Jennifer Neville, that 'For the Old English poet, the representation of the natural world helps to create the context of helplessness and alienation that motivates the seeking of God. For the Irish poet the representation of the natural world creates the context of wonder and joy that surrounds the seeking of God.'²⁶

To claim, however, that the Irish were more in touch or positively engaged with nature than their other North Atlantic neighbors would be to misrepresent the complexity of their project and its products. Wonder and joy characterize many of the aesthetically delightful landscapes created by Irish poets, yet these texts require more than marveling at creation—these landscapes of words accomplish important spiritual, intellectual, cultural and political aims. Irish place-writing is often so skillfully done that we overlook its intricacy, but a sustained examination highlights a persistent and conscientiously deployed methodology of spatial writing and practice: there is far more than environmental awe here, and verbalized Irish landscapes are rarely decorative backdrops.

The poem cited above demonstrates a deep appreciation for nature, but perhaps more valuably it provides a window on how writing and reading become intertwined with experiencing nature and the landscape. As Daniel Melia has observed, the text makes consistent use of all sorts of devices—poetic, linguistic, syntactical, thematic—to show the scribe surrounded by and infused with the landscape in his literary practice. The lines of the manuscript page trail off into lines of birdsong to envelop the speaker; and, as text and environment become fused, so too do its practitioners: the warbling, gray-cloaked cuckoo is also the figure of the cowled monk writing his joyful lyrics. Melia shows the myriad ways that the poem formally embodies the interlacing of text and environment to both structurally and thematically convince us of the benefits of conceptualizing landscape and literature together: the poem's metrical structure, with incessantly interlacing alliteration and rhyme, wraps around both monk and speaking birds; its linguistic devices, prepositions, verb forms and infix pronouns continuously place the poet in their middle; environmental descriptions show the speaker peacefully enfolded simultaneously by forest and poetry. As Melia writes, 'this, I think, is the point, the preferred subject of the poem, that the embrace of words, of trees, of music, of language, and of nature is ultimately the embrace of the Lord himself, just as every element in the poem is representation of His embrace'.²⁷

Moving to the inscription of this poem in the manuscript's margins, on another level we understand that the poet, through words, through imagining himself writing well in a forest, brings that treed space into a scriptorium. Scribes and readers gaze on a page, yet find themselves hearing birds trill, seeing a manuscript's leaves give way to green-leafed trees. These links provide a vernacular

parallel to Latin puns involving *liber*, both ‘book’ and ‘tree-bark’.²⁸ Though it is not verbally framed as such, we might read this poem as a riddle whose solution is any of the several Irish words that refer to both arboreal and codicological leaves: Irish *duille*, *duillend* or *duilleóg*, or perhaps *bileóc*, related to *bile*, a large tree, but also an especially venerated, sacred tree.²⁹ Yet this much-admired Old Irish poem moves beyond clever schoolroom punning as it leads us through a thoughtful meditation within its forest of words. The verses of this poem are generated in a linguistic and cultural context which can imagine books as trees, leaves as pages, and singing, writing and reading as the creation of a green-branched grove in which we can take shelter and dwell. An Irish literary poetics is, in important ways, also a poetics of place.

Terminology: a poetics of Irish space

When the foundational spatial theorist Gaston Bachelard calls for an appreciation of poetic utterance in contemplating spatiality, and states that ‘We must listen to poets’,³⁰ I am inclined to agree, for Ireland’s poets have much to say, and their works reveal rigorous consideration of how to write space. The author of the Old Irish *Auraicept na nÉces*, or ‘Primer of the Poets’, tells us that reading a text—in this case an ogam inscription—is like climbing a tree. Each hand reaches up to grab onto another letter or word, meaning literally grasped as the body pulls itself along the letters of the text:

Is amlaid im-drengar ogum amal im-drengar crann .i. saltrad fora frém in chroinn ar tús 7 do lám dess remut 7 do lám clé fo deoid. Is iar-sin leis 7 is fris 7 is trít 7 is immi.

(Ogam is climbed like a tree, that is, treading on the root of the tree first with your right hand before you and your left hand finally. It is after that it is along and towards it, through it and around it.)³¹

The *Acallam’s* Saint Patrick similarly remarks, generating the proverb (*in tseinbriathar*), that ‘*gablánach in rét an scéluighecht*’ (‘storytelling is a branching business!’).³² Patrick’s point is that narrative is a complicated affair, with *gablánach* denoting a branching structure that also figuratively connotes complexity, yet the proverb still asks us to consider story and landscape, texts and trees, together. Like the *Fidbaide* poet who imagines his literary process as the production of birdsong from within a treed sanctuary, the *Auraicept* directs Ireland’s readers to climb up, to hoist ourselves

onto the branches and to see what the world looks like from there. As shown throughout this study, audiences are encouraged and expected to move into these virtualized worlds in different ways: to journey along the pilgrimage routes; to join the voyagers in their currach; to learn and then traverse heroic Ireland's map with Cú Chulainn; to climb the famed heights with the *dindshenchas* poets; to circle Ireland with Patrick and Cailte; to walk Saint Patrick's Purgatory with the Knight, armed only with faith.

These texts exemplify a spatial poetics; each audience member must also become a spatial practitioner to use these narratives properly and productively, and the texts contain subtle instructions and examples of how to make it happen. We climb these trees, grab onto their various branches and, through reading, perch within the space the text builds for us. Through descriptive phrasing, dialogue and direct speech, identification with the main characters and transmission of the embodied experiences of these spaces, the literature is structured to provide geographic and temporal portals into verbalized landscapes. Manuscript pages are presented to us as cultivated landscapes that we weave through as our eye travels down a page's ruled lines. This is one aspect of what is meant by the term 'spatial practice'—imaginative movement into the verbalized landscapes actualized by the texts. The book's discussions of spatial practice also, however, encompass the motions, often exemplary, of characters within the text, and on occasion describe the movements of historical people through physical landscapes, such as the paths traced through Ireland by traveling poets, journeying pilgrims and everyday people as they walked a landscape that had been long imbued with story—spatial practice can be physical or imaginative, or both simultaneously.

In this book, I use the phrase 'poetics of Irish space' to include a number of elements, though I strive to ensure that context makes these meanings clear. Briefly, however, a poetics of Irish space denotes writing about Ireland and Irish landscapes by both Irish and non-Irish composers, using Latin or the vernaculars. 'Irish poetics of space' encompasses the ways that Irish authors write non-Irish spaces (such as Adomnán's narrativization of the Holy Land). I've employed the term 'poetics' because I want to evoke the power of verbal artistry as a way to explore, postulate and refine ideas about the relationships between landscape and literary form. When the composers I discuss reflect on the spatial textual forms they pursued and produced, they express their findings through their craft with an attentive eye to aesthetics.³³ I think in several

cases these medieval authors would argue that the most persuasive way to teach a poetics of Irish space is to do it well, to create a text that will be circulated, imitated, recopied and, hopefully, enshrined in tradition because it delights and is valued: a poetics of Irish space expressed and theorized as exemplum. One of the strengths of a persuasively conceived poetics is that it shows us rather than simply tells us; it grabs our imagination and pulls us into its world before we even realize we have internalized it and have come to know something new from the inside.

The phrase 'poetics of space' is suggestively open, and invites innovation and creative inflection. Never institutionalized or prescriptive, as the use of alternative terminology like 'theory' or 'grammar' of space might imply, the virtue of a poetics is its dynamic nature: it artfully takes new forms under the shaping guidance of each storyteller, poet, translator, scribe or even reader. This is not to deny, however, several consistencies in structure and form, and I aim throughout to identify characteristics, logics and devices that are shared across texts and traditions; but 'poetics' has a malleability that admits, even expects, ongoing reworkings. I therefore use 'poetics of space' to cover a number of things: environmental imagery and metaphor; descriptions of landscape creation and change; the fixing of story and history onto geographies through placenames, as well as subtler ways of planting and furrowing narrative into geographic contours; the virtual inhabitation of verbalized landscapes; and the clever ways in which geographic rhetoric, language and logics are used to define Ireland and the Irish people. A poetics of Irish space, then, encompasses a great many modes, devices, characteristics and styles, but all are unified in the production of landscapes of words, places that become powerfully accessible and inviting, enduring through their verbalization and textual inscription.

Ecocriticism and ecopoetics have informed my readings of Irish literature and place-writing, and there is scope and appetite for more extensive explorations in this area.³⁴ However, the sources I consider are first and foremost (though not exclusively) concerned with how humans make places, record their stories in the environment and appropriate landscapes for their own diverse purposes. Irish spatial discourses are primarily anthropocentric, and very rarely ecocentric. A poetics of Irish space celebrates the environment; however, the human voices and hands that materialize the landscape in speech and manuscript are of greater interest. We are left with the impression that, for the medieval Irish, one of the best

ways to experience the environment is through words. And over-reliance on the tools and terminology of a theoretical literature originating in times, places and environmental concerns not necessarily shared with Ireland's spatial poets, or an overly enthusiastic translation of medieval Ireland's processes and techniques into contemporary frameworks, can obscure the logics of the medieval sources, and those must be the initial focus. I have therefore only sparingly used an ecocritical vocabulary in this study.

For the same reasons, I have also avoided reading these sources explicitly through the lens and vocabulary of spatial theory, another rich multi-disciplinary scholarship that has long convinced us of the ways in which space and place are cultural constructs. My engagement with the Irish sources is heavily informed by various strands of spatial theory, and I do appropriate some of its terminology, most notably the idea of 'spatial practice' in discussing how a medieval Irish spatial poetics creates meaning through explicit attention to space and the vectors that shape it. Contemporary thinkers thus find their way into the discussion where their insights can clarify the primary sources. Nonetheless, I have also tried to limit theoretical jargon to allow the composers of the sources, and their characters, to articulate spatial literary concepts using the logics and imagery of medieval Ireland. Again, I hope that this will avoid a reductive approach, highlight some unexpected models for spatial thinking and practice and help us to appreciate the ways that medieval people probed, developed and theorized the links between space, place and language.

Structure of the book

The book largely adheres to a chronological organization to show how Ireland's spatial poetics developed over 600 years. Chapters 1 and 5 treat Latin texts that circulated extensively in Britain and Europe, written by Irish, English and Anglo-Welsh authors. Also widely translated into several vernaculars, these texts fired medieval Europe's imagination regarding the lands and peoples inhabiting the most remote spaces of the Western world, and provided the enduring foundations for Europe's views of Ireland and the Irish. Chapters 2–4 attend to Irish vernacular literary texts that show a development and refinement of a poetics of space and place. Aside from *Táin Bó Cúalnge*, these sources remain little-known outside of Celtic Studies, but they demonstrate how a poetics of space and place became a kind of national cultural project in

Ireland, and their highly nuanced products point to the successes of medieval Ireland's early spatial turn. Taken together, the Latin and vernacular sources show a long, continuously developed poetics of space and place that had extensive impact throughout the medieval period (and beyond—contemporary Irish writers are still celebrated for their particular genius in place-writing).

Chapter 1 identifies geography's central role in the earliest texts produced by and about the Irish ca. 700–900. I begin with one of the first Holy Land pilgrimage accounts composed in Britain, the widely circulated *De locis sanctis*, written by the Irishman Adomnán, and reproduced by an admiring Bede in the *Historia Ecclesiastica*. After identifying how *De locis sanctis* models successful spatial writing, I consider how Adomnán applied his methodologies of Jerusalem place-writing to North Atlantic holy sites in *Vita Sancti Columbae*. I then show how foundational accounts of Holy Land pilgrimage produced in Britain inform Irish texts about voyages in the holy waters surrounding Ireland and Britain, popularly conceived of as a Western *herimum in ociano*. The islands of the North Atlantic (including Ireland) are often envisioned as otherworldly lands of milk and honey, whose nature is largely determined by their position limning civilization and the unknown watery regions beyond. With the ocean conceived as a transformative frontier between the mortal world and the heavenly, the seascapes outside Ireland allow travelers and *peregrini*, historical and fictional, access to otherworldly, often revelatory spaces. A desire to investigate these places and be changed by them motivates the monastic Irish voyagers whose stories are told in the eighth-century Latin *Navigatio Sancti Brendani*, which circulated widely throughout Europe; the lay protagonists of the closely related vernacular Irish voyage texts (*immrama*) undergo parallel experiences as they move through these same geographies. These Irish spatial narratives provided an early and influential model for composers in Ireland, Britain and Europe to write texts inviting imaginative travel to holy places from the Dead Sea to the Irish Sea.

Shifting onto the plains, hills and forests of the Irish landmass and into the Irish language, the spatial poetics exemplified by earlier texts remain prominent, and ideas of Irish heroism are expressed through topographic narratives and spatially oriented language. Chapter 2 traces the development of the poetics of space in Ireland's heroic literature (ca. 900–1160) through a primary focus on medieval Irish literature's most celebrated figure, the warrior Cú Chulainn. I situate narratives from *Táin Bó Cúalnge*

alongside other texts from the Ulster Cycle to track how a spatial hero is constructed. Cú Chulainn is initially named Sétanta—one might translate this as ‘path-finder’ or ‘journeyer’—and tales of his birth and boyhood deeds place surprising emphasis on his ability to navigate new environments and internalize storied maps of the territory. The *Táin*, which features Cú Chulainn as its hero, is framed by a cosmogonic tale in which two otherworldly bulls, paralleling the narrative’s place-making warriors, tear through all of Ireland in their fight to the death: anger, battle-frenzy and looping circuits give Ireland its geographic contours and placenames. An eloquent Cú Chulainn’s increasing mastery of placelore and the erotics of place are examined in *Tochmarc Emire* (‘Wooing of Emer’). A brief look at *Mesca Ulad* (‘Drunkenness of the Ulstermen’) queries how Ulster’s spatially savvy hero is not ultimately immune to displacement: Cú Chulainn loses himself and the men of Ulster in hostile territories, and their frenzied ride transforms the landscape—their journey levels hills, clears trees and drains rivers—and generates a (mis)reading of the drunken, careening heroes as environmental features rather than humans, which also problematizes violence and heroic excess. Though often overlooked as mere background, the Irish landscape is one of the most fully developed characters in Ireland’s heroic literature. The chapter concludes with Saint Patrick conjuring the long-dead Cú Chulainn from the earth to tell his story in *Siaburcharpat Con Culaind* (‘Phantom-chariot of Cú Chulainn’): the discussion thus ends by highlighting issues regarding spatial narrative, textuality and the redemptive function of storytelling.

In the twelfth century, a period of significant Church reform and political upheaval, Irish geopoetical literature nonetheless flourished. Chapter 3 considers the *Dindshenchas Éirenn* (‘Placelore of Ireland’), a collection of around 200 poems and 200 prose pieces about named places comprising medieval Ireland’s most explicitly topographical narratives, which was formally brought together as a cohesive corpus and first attested in the Book of Leinster manuscript. Despite its size and clear popularity (it is preserved in over twenty manuscripts), scholars, including Edward Gwynn, the editor of the five-volume *Dindshenchas*, have dismissed this collection as ‘tiresome catalogues of names’, ‘parasitic’ in its integration of multiple historical, mythological and literary traditions.³⁵ That the composers were doing something powerful becomes apparent, however, if we recognize the *dindshenchas* as an imaginative and well-executed construction of a virtual Ireland. This chapter

considers the narrative topographies of the *Dindshenchas Érenn*, looks at the role of the *dindshenchas* place-making poets as medieval Ireland's geographers and tracks ideas about the use of verse as the appropriate literary form in which to write and formalize Ireland's landscape. The poets suggest that the verbalized territories of the *dindshenchas* poems, simultaneously real and imagined, were to be contemplatively accessed, virtually inhabited and moved through in an appropriative act. This, furthermore, was an act of collective national imagining. The island-wide bardic curriculum demanded that by the eighth year of training poets were able to recite the entire topographic corpus on demand, and multiple *dindshenchas* texts advertise the poets' ability to conjure lost sites and spaces with their words and visionary abilities. The *Dindshenchas Érenn* thus becomes a national landscape, a virtual Ireland created, performed and preserved by the poets and scribes of Ireland.

Chapter 4 looks at the late twelfth- or early thirteenth-century *Acallam na Senórach* ('Conversation of the Elders'), medieval Ireland's longest piece of literature at 8,000 prosimetric lines. Set in the fifth-century past, the *Acallam* resurrects both Saint Patrick and the pagan hero Cailte to lead a pilgrimage through a reimagined Irish topography, merging sacred and secular to posit a revalorized, sanctified Ireland for a post-conquest audience. The *Acallam* advocates walking and physical movement through an Ireland composed of green, wild, watery, outdoor spaces as knowledge-creating, while also promoting the benefits of imaginative engagement with a storied environment. The *Acallam* furthermore deploys a geospatial poetics to 'naturalize' Saint Patrick: as in the Irish legends of kingship and sovereignty, Patrick is endorsed by the land. His actions show an increasingly harmonious relationship with Ireland's environment, and culminate in his composition and delivery of Irish-language topographical poems. Patrick becomes a saintly practitioner of the Irish poetics of place, and the British-born foreigner is by the end of the text embraced as Ireland's patron saint. By modeling Irish spatial practices through a range of characters transformed over the course of the narrative, the *Acallam* shows the diverse members of Irish (and English) society how to engage with Ireland as a richly storied, sanctified national space. Written in Ireland after the English invasion and conquest, the *Acallam* illustrates a productive relationship between Ireland and Britain forged through travel: an Irish warrior and British saint walk and talk Irish place together. As explored in Chapter 5, the apologist Gerald of Wales, writing a few decades earlier, used

topographic rhetorics to silence Irish voices; the *Acallam* might thus be seen as a response to a disenfranchising colonialist poetics of Irish space.

Chapter 5 addresses how Church reformers and participants in the English invasion of Ireland also developed and consumed a poetics of Irish place to argue for their own entitlement to Ireland via texts first created and disseminated in the 1180s. I turn first to the works of Gerald of Wales, whose *Topographia* and *Expugnatio Hibernica* show Ireland physically rejecting the ‘unworthy’ Irish from the landscape and embracing more environmentally savvy English and Welsh settlers, exhorting them to plant themselves in Irish soil. I examine the process by which the identities of Ireland’s invaders are mapped onto the territory, and show how a changed Ireland is generated through textual culture, particularly important when in historical reality Ireland resisted full conquest. Gerald’s oration of the *Topographia* in Oxford in 1188 furthermore accomplished the importation of his imagined Ireland back to England. I argue that these oral performances created a virtual Ireland, traveled, conquered and, to some extent, inhabited, by all who read or heard Giraldus’s account. Such writings about Ireland emerge afresh not just as records of conquest but as actual textual conquests of land. To show how an exported textual Ireland provided a spiritual and contemplative testing ground for a different kind of international reader, the chapter then turns to the pilgrimage site of Saint Patrick’s Purgatory in the north of Ireland. Accounts of this Irish purgatory were first composed in the 1180s (*Tractatus de Purgatorio Sancti Patricii*), but were repeatedly copied, circulated and translated over the next 500 years: 150 manuscripts of the Latin text survive, and another 150 manuscripts confirm its translation into virtually every European vernacular. Transformative journeys to purgatory and the earthly paradise within Irish space are a terrestrial development of the voyage narratives that open the book, but also the manifestation of an English poetics of Irish place. While Saint Patrick’s Purgatory is a site of pilgrimage, its rhetoric nonetheless suggests a heroic, crusading conquest of Ireland’s dangerous spaces in which English reformers also became textual heroes. As in Gerald’s own spatial poetics, the *Tractatus* narrative’s Irish purgatorial landscape ultimately, I suggest, writes the Irish out so as to privilege other perspectives and agent positions. In conclusion, I examine how both Gerald’s works and the *Tractatus* accomplished the export of an English poetics of Irish space which became highly influential throughout Europe.

Between 700 and 1250, Ireland's textual geographies attained high levels of sophistication, pointing to a conscious deployment of discursive Irish landscapes. Rooted in the physical geography of Ireland, these geospatial narratives ultimately moved beyond the land itself and became powerful, portable worlds that could be accessed and occupied by readers and listeners anywhere and at any time. The broad diachronic scope of this book, covering some six centuries of writing, demonstrates the ongoing centrality of spatial discourses to the development of identities of the Irish and their North Atlantic neighbors, as well as the ways in which place-writers responded to changing historical and political circumstances. Through focused studies of important texts, *A landscape of words* places the poetics of Irish space into the bigger picture of how, and why, medieval people wrote space, place, landscape and environment. The literatures of Irish place comprise an extensive and highly developed corpus from which medievalists and scholars of place can learn much. The Venerable Bede even claimed that Irish writing might offer a potent lifesaving elixir:

Denique uidimus, quibusdam a serpente percussis, rasa folia codicum qui de Hibernia fuerant, et ipsam rasuram aquae inmissam ac potui datam talibus protinus totam uim ueneni grassantis, totum inflati corporis absumsisse ac sedasse tumorem.

(We have seen how, in the case of people suffering from snake-bite, the leaves of manuscripts from Ireland were scraped, and the scrapings put in water and given to the sufferer to drink. These scrapings at once absorbed the whole violence of the spreading poison and assuaged the swelling.)³⁶

Though his meaning is literal here, we might consider Bede's sentiments about Irish texts on another level as well. As Máire Ní Mhaonaigh has written, 'Literary exchanges undoubtedly formed part of the intense contact between Ireland and England in Bede's own time and later and it may be that their eastern neighbours learned much from the confident control the Irish had of their own written tongue.'³⁷ The multivalent products of a sanctified geography, Irish letters exceed the sum of their parts. Words that emanate from this Western island of milk and honey have power, a belief that we will see developed across the texts produced by and about the Irish. Irish manuscripts might save us, Bede suggests, and it is worth drinking deeply from them.³⁸

Notes

- 1 *Columbanus, Epistolae*, v. 3 in *Sancti Columbanii Opera*, ed./trans. G. S. M. Walker (Dublin: DIAS, 1957), pp. 38–9.
- 2 See references in to Patrick's *Confessio usque ad ultimum terrae and extremis terrae* in Ludwig Bieler (ed.), *Libri Epistolarum Sancti Patricii Episcopi* (Dublin: Royal Irish Academy, 1993), 1, 38, pp. 57, 78. See also Thomas O'Loughlin, 'Patrick on the Margins of Space and Time', in K. McGroarty (ed.), *Eklogai: Studies in Honour of Thomas Finan and Gerard Watson* (Maynooth: National University of Ireland, Maynooth, 2001), pp. 44–58.
- 3 *Cummian's Letter De Controversia Paschali*, ed./trans. Moira Walsh and Dáibhí Ó Cróinín (Toronto: Pontifical Institute for Mediaeval Studies, 1988), pp. 72–5.
- 4 Available widely in Latin, by the late ninth or tenth century Bede's account had even been translated into Irish. Próinséas Ní Chatháin, 'Bede's Ecclesiastical History in Irish', *Peritia* 3 (1984), 115–30.
- 5 Bede, *Historia ecclesiastica* [hereafter *Historia*], I.1, in *Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, ed./trans. Bertram Colgrave and R. A. B. Mynors (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969), pp. 18–20.
- 6 Gerald of Wales, *Giraldi Cambrensis Opera*, Rolls Series, vol. 5, ed. James. F. Dimock (London: Longman, 1867), *Præfatio Secunda*, pp. 20–1.
- 7 Gerald of Wales, *The History and Topography of Ireland*, ed./trans. John O'Meara (New York: Penguin, 1982), p. 31.
- 8 See Elizabeth Rambo, *Colonial Ireland in Medieval English Literature* (Selinsgrove, PA: Susquehanna University Press, 1994), pp. 35–40 and Kathy Lavezzo, *Angels on the Edge of the World* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2006), pp. 54–8.
- 9 Though these discourses circulated in Ireland, maps themselves are rare, and there there appears to be no native Irish term for map. Rolf Baumgarten, 'Geographical Orientation of Ireland in Isidore and Orosius', *Peritia* 3 (1984), 91.
- 10 Isidore of Seville, *The Etymologies*, trans. Stephen Barney *et al.* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), p. 198.
- 11 Isidore of Seville, *Etymologiae*, ed. W. M. Lindsay (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1911), IX.ii.105.
- 12 The phrasing adapts that of Seamus Heaney, 'The Sense of Place', in *Preoccupations* (London: Faber & Faber, 1980), p. 132. Fully quoted below in Chapter 3, note 72.
- 13 Anders Ahlqvist (ed.), *The Early Irish Linguist: An Edition of the Canonical Part of the Auraicept na nÉces* (Helsinki: Societas Scientiarum Fennica, 1983), pp. 47–8.
- 14 Kay Muhr, 'Water Imagery in Early Irish', *Celtica* 23 (1999), 200.

- 15 Edward Gwynn (ed./trans.), *The Metrical Dindshenchas*, 5 vols (Dublin: Royal Irish Academy, 1903–35), III, pp. 26–9. Henceforth *MD*. The texts and translations cited here are Gwynn’s, though I have occasionally edited the translations for clarity. Roman numerals refer to volume numbers, with the following Arabic numerals denoting page numbers.
- 16 An overview of *mappae mundi* and their rivers is David Woodward, ‘Medieval Mappaemundi’, in J. B. Harley and David Woodward (eds.), *The History of Cartography, Volume 1: Cartography in Prehistoric, Ancient, and Medieval Europe and the Mediterranean* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1987), pp. 286–368, with rivers table at p. 327.
- 17 *Dúnad* with *side* also occurs at the end of stanzas 19, 20 and 23.
- 18 *MD* III, pp. 34–5.
- 19 The text, preserved in the margins of a Greek New Testament glossed in Latin, probably by an Irish monk at Saint Gall, is edited in Rudolf Thurneysen, *Old Irish Reader* (Dublin: DIAS, 1981), p. 41. Translation is my own.
- 20 See *eDIL* s.v. *róm*.
- 21 Lisa Bitel, *Landscape with Two Saints: How Genovefa of Paris and Brigit of Kildare Built Christianity in Barbarian Europe* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), p. 139.
- 22 Bitel, *Landscape*, pp. 145–58.
- 23 Translated by Ciaran Carson, ‘The Scribe in the Woods’, in Maurice Riordan (ed.), *The Finest Music: Early Irish Lyrics* (London: Faber & Faber, 2014), p. 4.
- 24 Ruth Lehmann (ed./trans.), *Early Irish Verse* (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1982), p. 25.
- 25 See Alfred Siewers, *Strange Beauty: Ecocritical Approaches to Early Medieval Landscape* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), and ‘The *Periphyseon*, the Irish “Otherworld”, and Early Medieval Nature’, in Willemien Otten and Michael Allen (eds.), *Eriugena and Creation* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2014), pp. 321–47.
- 26 Jennifer Neville, *Representations of the Natural World in Old English Poetry* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 37.
- 27 Daniel Melia, ‘A Poetic Klein Bottle’, in A. T. E. Matonis and Daniel Melia (eds.), *Celtic Language, Celtic Culture: A Festschrift for Eric P. Hamp* (Van Nuys, CA: Ford and Bailie, 1990), p. 194.
- 28 See Mary Carruthers, *The Craft of Thought: Meditation, Rhetoric, and the Making of Images, 400–1200* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp. 160–1.
- 29 *eDIL* s.v. *duille*; s.v. *duillend*; s.v. *duilleóg*; s.v. *1 bileóc*.
- 30 Gaston Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space*, trans. Maria Jolas (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1994), p. 89.
- 31 *Auraicept*, §6.5–6, p. 51.

- 32 Whitley Stokes (ed.), *Acallamh na Senórach* in *Irische Texte*, vol. IV (Leipzig: S. Hirzel, 1900), lines 3669–70. This translation is given by Ann Dooley, *Playing the Hero: Reading the Irish Saga Táin Bó Cúalnge* (Toronto: Toronto University Press, 2006), p. 40.
- 33 Several Irish tracts on poetry and its practitioners are extant—see for instance the eighth-century law tract *Uraicecht na Ríar: The Poetic Grades of Early Irish Law*, ed./trans. Liam Breatnach (Dublin: DIAS, 1987). As tracts on poetic composition such as the Old Irish ‘Cauldron of Poesy’ show, even prescriptive treatises are simultaneously metaphor-laden creative compositions: see Amy Mulligan, “‘The Satire of the Poet Is a Pregnancy’: Pregnant Poets, Body Metaphors and Cultural Production in Medieval Ireland”, *Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 108.4 (October 2009), 481–505.
- 34 Though widely criticized, two such studies are Francesco Benozzo, *Landscape Perception in Early Celtic Literature* (Aberystwyth: Celtic Studies Publications, 2004), and Siewers, *Strange Beauty*. For a survey of Celtic environmental literature and its scholarship, see A. Joseph McMullen and Kristen Carella, ‘Locating Place and Landscape in Early Insular Literature’, *Journal of Literary Onomastics* 6 (2017), 1–10.
- 35 *MD* I, p. 75; *MD* V, p. 95.
- 36 Bede, *Historia*, I.1, pp. 20–1.
- 37 Máire Ní Mhaonaigh, ‘Of Bede’s “Five Languages and Four Nations”: The Earliest Writing from Ireland, Scotland and Wales’, in Clare Lees (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Early Medieval English Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), pp. 99–119, at 119.
- 38 See Chapter 3 on the Western Apache belief that wisdom sits in places and we must drink from them.